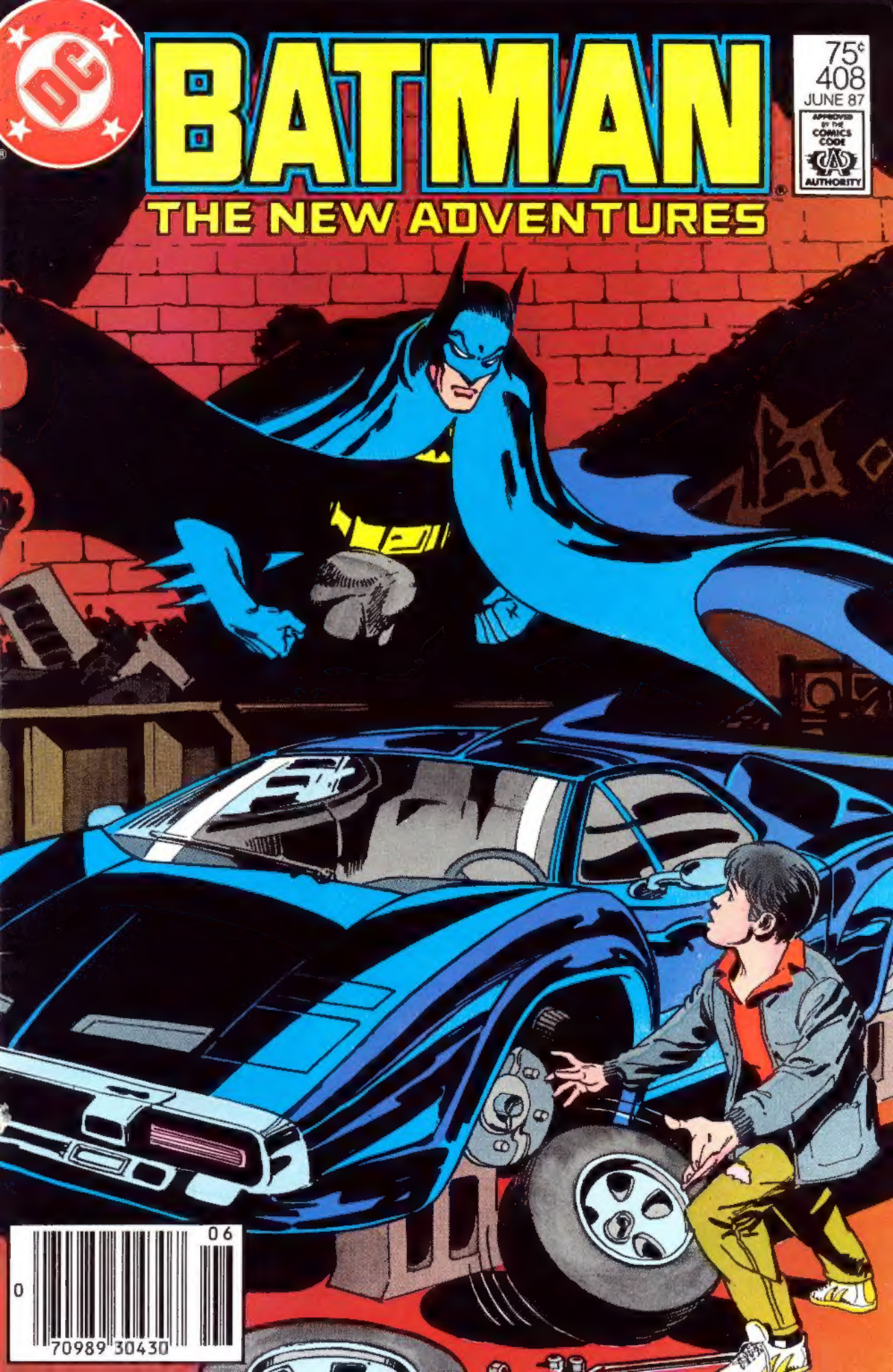

DC
BATMAN
THE NEW ADVENTURES
75¢
408
JUNE 87
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
0 70989 30430 06

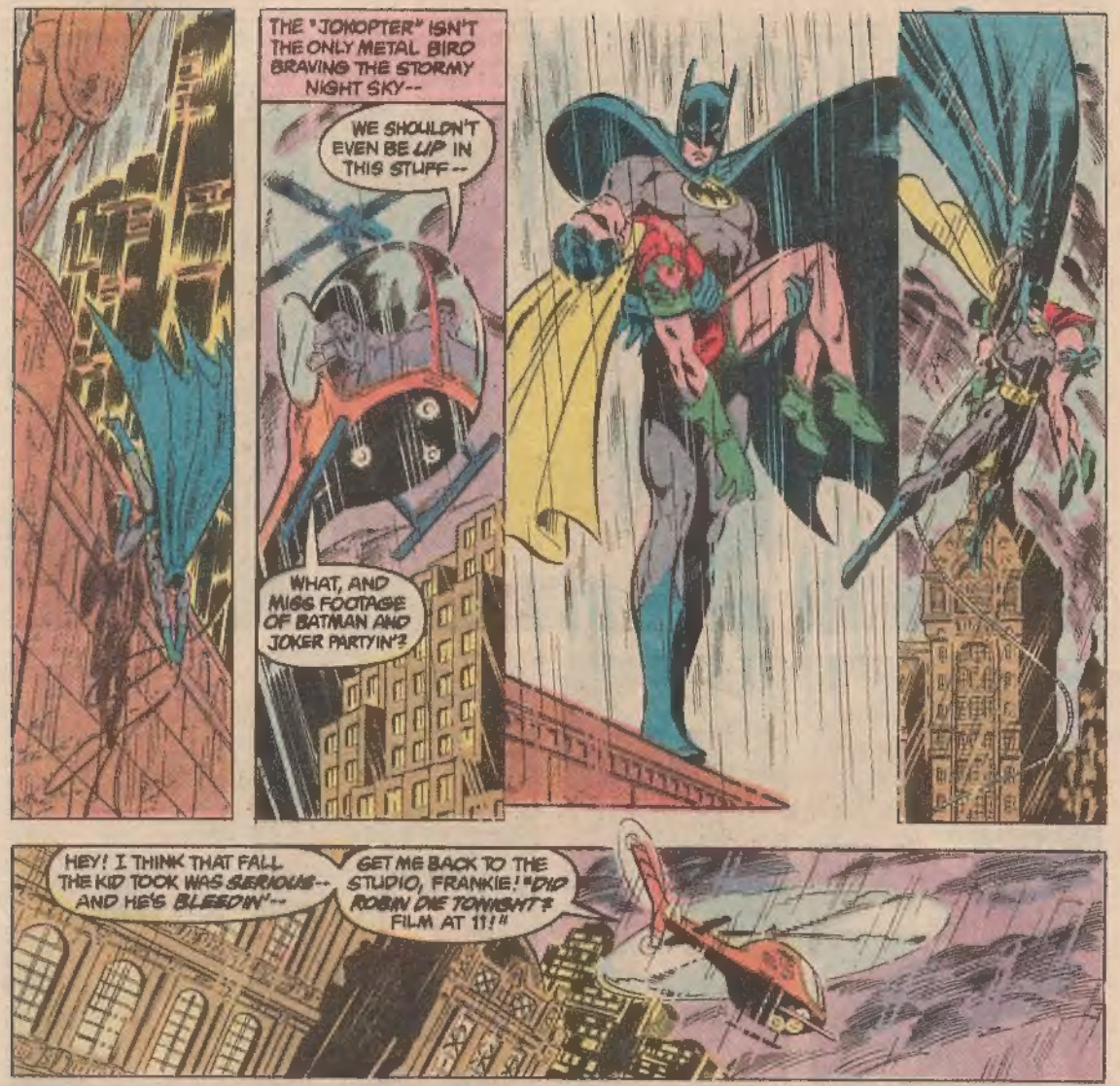
"DID ROBIN DIE TONIGHT?"
GIVE IT UP, JOKER! THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT TO RUN!
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, MY BATTY FRIEND -- THIS IS THE PINNACLE OF MY BRILLIANT CAREER!
A TRIUMPH I ACHIEVED ALONE -- NO HENCHMEN TO SULLY ITS PURITY!
FEAST YOUR BLANK EYES ON THESE -- THE SO-CALLED "HOPELESS DIAMONDS" -- THE SMILE OF DEATH --
MAX ALLAN COLLINS · CHRIS WARNER
SCRIPT ART
MIKE DeCARLO: INKER
TODD KLEIN: LETTERS · ADRIENNE ROY: COLORS
DENNY O'NEIL: EDITOR

BATMAN 408 (USPS 045-340). Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics,Inc., Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 1981, New York, NY 10185. Annual subscription rate $9.00. Outside U.S.A. $11.00 in U.S. funds. Copyright © 1987 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc.
Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives,Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York , NY 10017. (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.
D.C. Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

I'LL GIVE YOU PURITY...
UH, UH, UH--
I DON'T SHARE YOUR ABSURD ANTI-FIREARMS FETISH, REMEMBER--
KA-BLAM! KA-BLAM!
ROBIN!
ROBIN? MY GOD, ROBIN...
HA! HA! HA! HA! SING ALONG WITH ME, BATMAN-- "WHEN THE RED, RED ROBIN GOES BOB, BOB, BOBBIN' ALONG!"
2

OH MY-- WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO? I COULD EXTERMINATE THE BAT WHILE HE'S PRE-OCCUPIED WITH HIS WINGED BIRD--
I... I CAN MAKE IT, BATMAN-- GET HIM...
CAN YOU HANG ON, SON? I HAVE A MADMAN TO DEAL WITH--
DO IT.
BUT IF I SHOOT THE BATMAN, WHO WOULD I HAVE TO PLAY WITH?
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
AH-- MY RIDE!
MANY HAVE DIED FOR THOSE ROCKS, JOKER-- AND YOU JUST HAD TO ADD TO THE LIST, DIDN'T YOU?
WHUP WHUP
"BUT OF COURSE! DON'T BE A FOOL, BATMAN--MORE DEATHS ONLY MAKE THE SMILE OF DEATH MORE VALUABLE!"
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WH
THINK OF THEIR WORTH NOW THAT THE BOY BLUNDERER HAS PAID HIS LIFE TOWARD THEIR UNENDING DEBT!
SORRY TO SPOIL YOUR LITTLE JOKE-- BUT ROBIN'S ALIVE--
3

THEN LET US CONSIDER ADDING YOUR DEATH TO THE LIST--HOW PRECIOUS THESE STONES WOULD BECOME!
I COULD SHOOT YOU IN THE FACE--THAT WOULD BE FUN...
BUT I PREFER TO WIN GRACIOUSLY--
WHAP!
ROBIN! I'M ON MY WAY TO YOU, BOY!
WHUMP!
OH MY GOD--
4
CONTINUED ON 32ND PAGE FOLLOWING.


THE "JOKOPTER" ISN'T THE ONLY METAL BIRD BRAVING THE STORMY NIGHT SKY--
WE SHOULDN'T EVEN BE UP IN THIS STUFF--
WHAT, AND MISS FOOTAGE OF BATMAN AND JOKER PARTYIN'?
HEY! I THINK THAT FALL THE KID TOOK WAS SERIOUS-- AND HE'S BLEEDIN'--
GET ME BACK TO THE STUDIO, FRANKIE! "DID ROBIN DIE TONIGHT? FILM AT 11!"
DESPITE THE APPARENTLY FATAL SHOOTING AND FALL OF HIS TEEN-AGED PARTNER, BATMAN TOOK TIME OUT TO MAKE A DELIVERY...
"...THE JOKER WAS DROPPED ON THE DOORSTEP OF ARKHAM ASYLUM LIKE AN UNWANTED CHILD--"
AND A CHILD HE IS! THE MOST DANGEROUS CHILD ALIVE--

WELL, I'M NOT A CHILD--AND I'M NOT DEAD, EITHER! I JUST CAN'T GO ALONG WITH WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
WHAT, THAT THE JOKER'S THE MEANEST OF MEAN LITTLE KIDS?
NO--THAT I'M A KID! AND THAT "ROBIN" IS BETTER OFF LEFT DEAD--
YOU ALMOST DID DIE TONIGHT, DICK--AND HAD YOU, THE JOKER WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE. I WOULD.
ARE YOU SAYING IT HASN'T BEEN GREAT? THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN YOUR STRONG RIGHT ARM?
YOU HAVE, SON--BUT WE'VE BEEN LUCKY. IN WHAT I DO, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR A CHILD.
A CHILD!
DON'T EXCITE YOURSELF, MASTER DICK--YOU'VE BEEN WOUNDED.
I'LL SAY I'VE BEEN WOUNDED--PLENTY OF TIMES. BUT NEVER THIS DEEP--
IF BY THAT YOU MEAN I'VE WOUNDED YOU, SON, I'M SORRY. AND YOU ARE A MAN, NOW--MAN ENOUGH TO ACCEPT MY DECISION.

FINE. IF YOU WANT ROBIN TO STAY DEAD, THAT'S OKAY WITH ME. BUT YOU'VE *TRAINED* ME TOO WELL--MADE ME WHAT I AM.
"YOU CAN'T KEEP ME FROM PURSUING *MY OWN DESTINY*.."
THAT'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED, DICK--A MAN MIGHT AS WELL *PURSUE* HIS DESTINY...BECAUSE IT'LL *CATCH* HIM, IF HE DOESN'T.
IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOW, THE BATMAN PURSUES *HIS* DESTINY--
AND THE MEDIA PURSUES *BATMAN*--
THE APPARENT DEATH OF ROBIN GOES BEYOND THE ISSUE OF BATMAN'S VIGILANTISM INTO THAT OF VIRTUAL *CHILD ABUSE*--
EDITORIAL
GOTHAM GAZETTE
WHERE IS ROBIN?
vue
IS ROBIN DEAD?

IS ROBIN DEAD?
LITERALLY? NO. TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES? YES.
I CAN'T SAY I DISAGREE WITH YOUR DECISION TO GO SOLO--THE DANGERS OF WORKING WITH A YOUTH, EVEN AS ABLE A YOUTH AS ROBIN, OUTWEIGH ALL ADVANTAGES.
BUT WHY NOT INFORM THE MEDIA THAT ROBIN IS ALIVE? WHY ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE CRUCIFIED IN THE PRESS?
INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW?
WOULD THEY BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD THEM? NO. DO I CARE WHAT THE PRESS--WHAT ANYONE --THINKS OF MY WORK? NO.
"WELL, THIS VICKI VALE IS KILLING YOU--"
BRUCE ISN'T IN? SEEMS LIKE HE'S ALWAYS OUT FOR A NIGHT ON THE TOWN. WELL, REMIND HIM OF OUR LUNCHEON DATE TOMORROW, ALFRED.

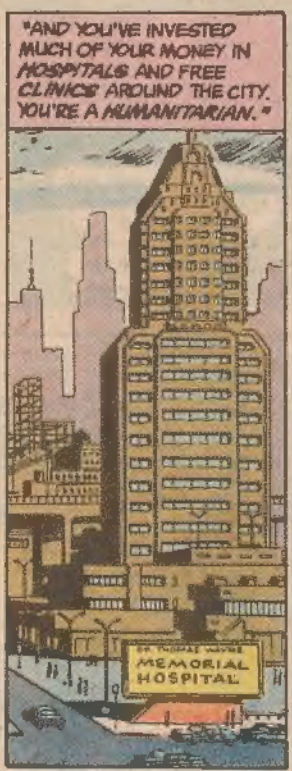
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!
CHAIR THE COMMITTEE OF CONCERNED CITIZENS AGAINST THE BATMAN. MY PUBLISHER IS BEHIND THE EFFORT 100 PERCENT.

VICKI, YOU KNOW THAT I PUT MY MONEY-- AND MY REPUTATION-- ON THE LINE, WHEN IT COMES TO A WORTHY CAUSE, BUT...

WE DON'T NEED YOUR MONEY-- JUST YOUR GOOD NAME.

I SERVE ON THE BOARDS OF ANY NUMBER OF SOCIALLY CONCERNED ORGANIZATIONS--


"AND YOU'VE INVESTED MUCH OF YOUR MONEY IN HOSPITALS AND FREE CLINICS AROUND THE CITY. YOU'RE A HUMANITARIAN."
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAY IT, VICKI--I'M A CLASSIC VICTIM OF LIBERAL GUILT.
I THINK A MAN WHO WAS ORPHANED BY GUNFIRE, ONLY TO INHERIT A FORTUNE BUILT ON MUNITIONS, HAS A RIGHT TO FEEL A LITTLE GUILTY.

WHO BETTER THAN BRUCE WAYNE TO UNDERSTAND--AND TAKE A STAND AGAINST--THE VIOLENCE OF A BATMAN? VIOLENCE WHICH CAN ONLY LEAD TO MORE VIOLENCE?
YEAH, WELL, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WITHOUT BATMAN, THIS CITY WOULD BE A HELLUVA LOT MORE VIOLENT--
YOU'RE ALWAYS DEFENDING THAT HALLOWEEN HOODLUM! HE'S A MENACE--HE EVEN GOT A YOUNG BOY KILLED!
THE YOUNG MAN KNOWN AS ROBIN HAS NOT BEEN PROVEN TO BE DEAD.
EXCUSE ME
SIR, WOULD YOU MIND CHECKING FOR YOUR WALLET?
WHAT IS TH--HEY!
MY WALLET'S GONE! HOW DID YOU--
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT--
BRUCE!

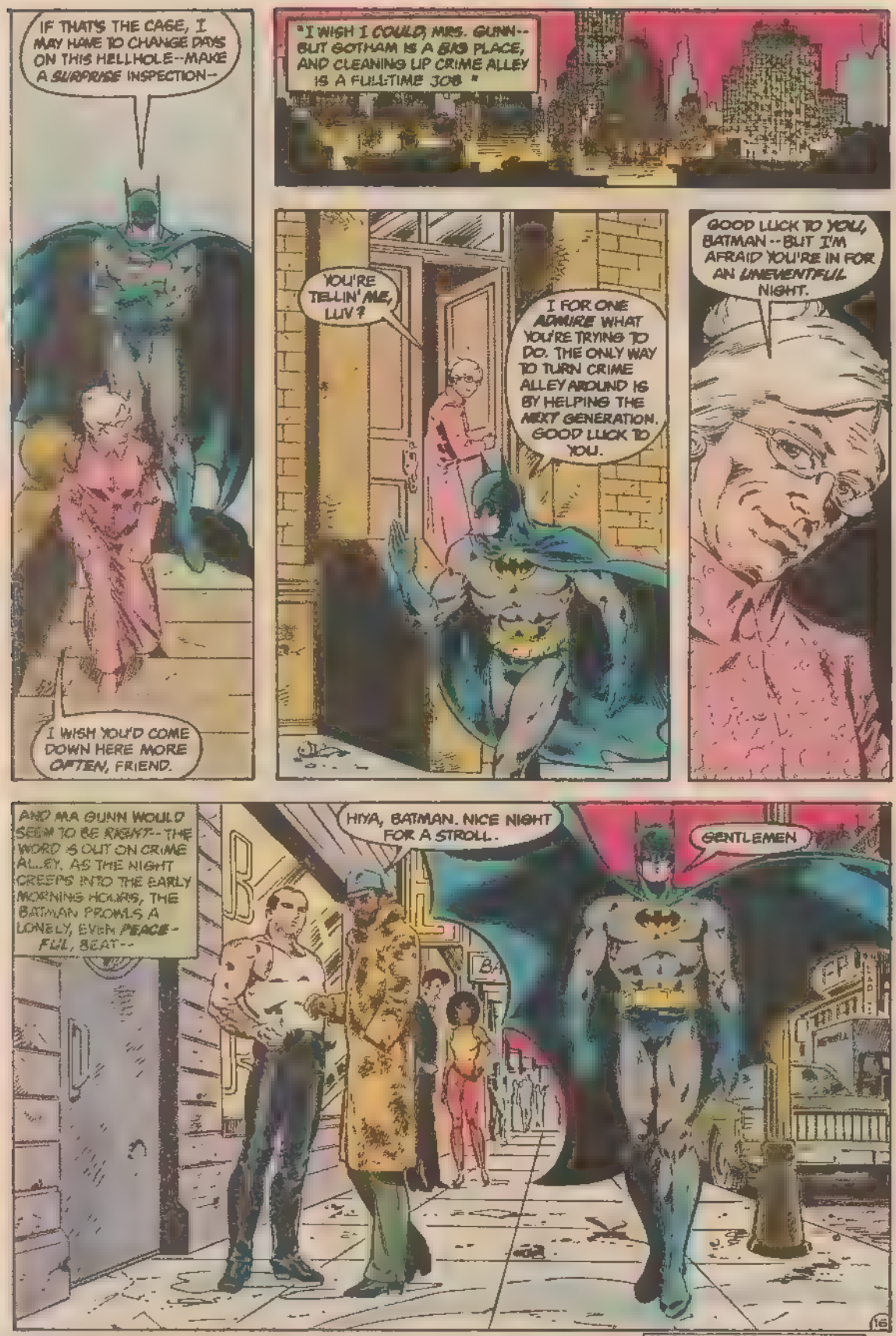
EXCUSE ME, BUT I THINK YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU...
HUH? I TINK YOU MISCONSCREWED SOMETHIN', BUDDY
COME ALONG QUIETLY
ARE YOU NUTS? ROUTINE SEVEN, FELLAS--

YOU GONNA FIGHT ALL T'REE OF US, PAL?
UH-OH. IF I LOOK TOO GOOD, HERE, MY CAPE'LL BE HANGIN' OUT--
SURE HE IS--HE'S A HE-RO! A REGULAR BATMAN--
BRUCE--YOU WERE FOOLISH TO GET INVOLVED--BUT I LOVE YOU FOR IT.
I'M STILL NOT CHAIRING THAT COMMITTEE--
WHY DIDN'T ANY OF THESE OTHER UPSTANDING CITIZENS PITCH IN AND HELP YOU?
WHAT, AND BE CALLED FASCIST VIGILANTES BY THE MEDIA?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES--HERE'S YOUR BILLFOLD--SOMEHOW IN THE SCUFFLE I MANAGED TO GET HOLD OF IT

ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT? WE CAN GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM--
AND PUT A COLD COMPRESS ON MY [illegible] BODY? NO THANK... GIVE YOU A LIFT SOMEWHERE?
THANKS, NO -- I DON'T THINK YOU'D MUCH ENJOY DRIVING ME DOWN TO CRIME ALLEY--
CRIME ALLEY? WHAT TAKES YOU THERE, OF ALL PLACES?
A STORY, WHAT ELSE? WE'RE DOING A FOLLOW-UP ON THAT CONTROVERSIAL SCHOOL THAT'S OPENED DOWN THERE.
OH, YES... I'VE FOLLOWED THAT IN THE NEWS - "MA GUNN'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS" HOW IS THE OLD GIRL'S BATTLE WITH THE POWERS-THAT-BE COMING ALONG?
"PRETTY WELL -- THE MEDIA HAS PUBLICIZED HER BACK-TO-BASICS APPROACH. BUT BECAUSE SHE SHELTERS RUNAWAYS WITHOUT COOPERATING WITH SOCIAL AGENCIES, 'THE OLD GIRL' HAS HER ENEMIES.
MA GUNN'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS
"YOU OUGHT TO CONSIDER GIVING HER SOME FUNDING, BRUCE -- THE SCHOOL IS ACCREDITED, YOU KNOW... MA GUNN WAS A TEACHER IN AUSTRALIA FOR YEARS--"

CRIME ALLEY-- IRONIC THAT VICKI VALE SHOULD INVOKE THAT PLACE ON THIS DAY--A DAY WHEN BRUCE WAYNE, DESPITE THE PLEASANT, SUNNY AFTERNOON, IS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE NIGHT AHEAD...
A NIGHT THAT COMES FOR BATMAN ONCE EVERY YEAR--LIKE CHRISTMAS, BUT NOWHERE NEAR SO FESTIVE--
A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO, CRIME ALLEY WAS PARK ROW--BISTROS AND THEATERS AND TOWNHOUSES--
BUT LIKE A WINO'S TEETH, PARK ROW DECAYED INTO SOMETHING FOUL... INTO THE MEAN STREETS CALLED CRIME ALLEY.
SOME SAY THE DECLINE OF THIS ONCE FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOOD BEGAN WHEN A THIEF SHOT DOWN A SOCIALLY PROMINENT DOCTOR AND HIS LOVELY WIFE--
THEIR SON, A MERE BOY, WITNESSED IT, THEY SAY... BUT WHATEVER THE CASE, THE AREA BEGAN EARNING A REPUTATION FOR BEING UNSAFE. OUT OF THESE DEATHS, IT MIGHT BE SAID, CRIME ALLEY WAS BORN--
14

WHY DO I FEEL COMPELLED TO *RETURN* HERE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THAT DARK NIGHT? THIS PILGRIMAGE, THIS *OBSESSION* TO RID CRIME ALLEY OF CRIME FOR THIS ONE NIGHT EACH YEAR...
DOES IT *REALLY* HONOR MY PARENTS' *MEMORY*? AFTER ALL, THE NEXT DAY--THE NEXT NIGHT--CRIME *RETURNS* TO THE ALLEY, WHILE I'M BUSY FIGHTING *LARGER* EVILS?
MA GUNN IS DOING MORE GOOD IN CRIME ALLEY THAN I'LL *EVER* DO--SHE'S A DAY-IN-DAY-OUT COMBATANT IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD'S WAR!
G'DAY, BATMAN--NO CRIME IN CRIME ALLEY THIS FINE EVENIN', AY?
MA GUNN! IT'S ABOUT *TIME* WE MET--
I HEAR GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL--
I'VE HEARD A FEW TALES *ABOUT YOU*, TOO, LUV. QUIET LITTLE NIGHT WE HAVE HERE...
TOO QUIET IS, I THINK, THE OPERATIVE PHRASE.
I'M AFRAID THE WORD'S AROUND, LUV--THIS IS THE NIGHT *BATMAN* COMES TO CRIME ALLEY. THEY SAY FOR SIX YEARS OR MORE YOU'VE COME ON THIS VERY NIGHT--


IF THAT'S THE CAGE, I MAY HAVE TO CHANGE DAYS ON THIS HELLHOLE--MAKE A SURPRISE INSPECTION--
I WISH YOU'D COME DOWN HERE MORE OFTEN, FRIEND.
"I WISH I COULD, MRS. GUNN--BUT GOTHAM IS A BIG PLACE, AND CLEANING UP CRIME ALLEY IS A FULL-TIME JOB."
YOU'RE TELLIN' ME, LUV?
I FOR ONE ADMIRE WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO. THE ONLY WAY TO TURN CRIME ALLEY AROUND IS BY HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION. GOOD LUCK TO YOU.
GOOD LUCK TO YOU, BATMAN--BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE IN FOR AN UNEVENTFUL NIGHT.
AND MA GUNN WOULD SEEM TO BE RIGHT--THE WORD IS OUT ON CRIME ALLEY. AS THE NIGHT CREEPS INTO THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, THE BATMAN PROWLS A LONELY, EVEN PEACEFUL, BEAT--
HIYA, BATMAN. NICE NIGHT FOR A STROLL.
GENTLEMEN
16

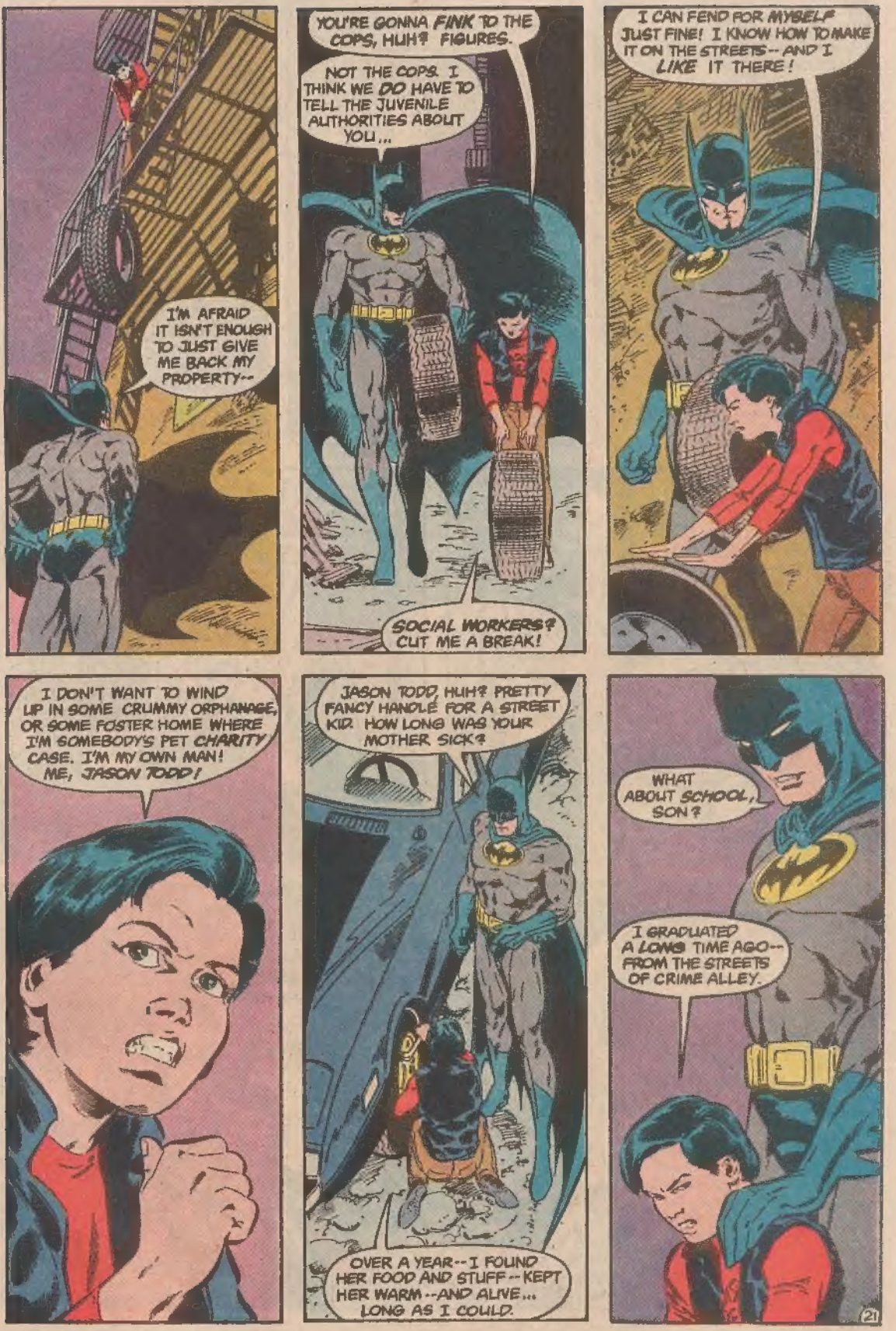
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BUT CRIME, LIKE THE BATMAN, NEVER REALLY TAKES A NIGHT OFF··
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
AND BATMAN DOES SOMETHING HE HAS NEVER DONE BEFORE, IN CRIME ALLEY··
HA HA HA HA!
I HAVE TO HAND IT TO 'EM- IT TAKES STONES TO RIP OFF THE BATMAN'S BUGGY··
AND AS BATMAN KNEELS TO APPRAISE THE SITUATION, A CRIMINAL RETURNS TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME ··
WELL··COME TO FINISH THE JOB, BOY?
WHOOPS
17

YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME BACK MY TIRES.
WHO SAYS I TOOK 'EM?
WHAT ELSE IS THE TIRE IRON FOR?
THIS!
YOU LITTLE SON OF A GUN--
TRY AND CATCH ME, YOU BIG BOOB!
I COULD STOP HIM EASILY ENOUGH, BUT MAYBE I SHOULD LET HIM LEAD ME TO MY WHITEWALLS...

Kid Kuo
Poison Idea
THAT'LL STUNT YOUR GROWTH, KID
TAKE YOUR LOUSY TIRES, ALREADY, AND GO -- JUST LEMME ALONE!

SON-- DO YOU... LIVE HERE?
YEAH! WHAT OF IT? IT'S MINE, AND I LIKE IT
[illegible]RE YOUR FOLKS?
I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY POP IS DOIN' TIME AGAIN, MOST LIKELY.
AND YOUR MOTHER?
SHE'S DEAD SHE GOT SICK. OKAY? NOW GET OUTA HERE!
OR DO I HAVE TO MAKE YOU LEAVE?
YOU'RE A SCRAPPY ONE, I'LL SAY THAT MUCH FOR YOU...
20
CONTINUED ON


I'M AFRAID IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO JUST GIVE ME BACK MY PROPERTY--
YOU'RE GONNA FINK TO THE COPS, HUH? FIGURES.
NOT THE COPS. I THINK WE DO HAVE TO TELL THE JUVENILE AUTHORITIES ABOUT YOU...
SOCIAL WORKERS? CUT ME A BREAK!
I CAN FEND FOR MYSELF JUST FINE! I KNOW HOW TO MAKE IT ON THE STREETS -- AND I LIKE IT THERE!
I DON'T WANT TO WIND UP IN SOME CRUMMY ORPHANAGE, OR SOME FOSTER HOME WHERE I'M SOMEBODY'S PET CHARITY CASE. I'M MY OWN MAN! ME, JASON TODD!
JASON TODD, HUH? PRETTY FANCY HANDLE FOR A STREET KID. HOW LONG WAS YOUR MOTHER SICK?
OVER A YEAR -- I FOUND HER FOOD AND STUFF -- KEPT HER WARM -- AND ALIVE... LONG AS I COULD.
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL, SON?
I GRADUATED A LONG TIME AGO -- FROM THE STREETS OF CRIME ALLEY.
21

OKAY, WE'LL MAKE A DEAL... NO SOCIAL WORKERS. NO COPS. BUT YOU HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL...
WHAT SCHOOL?
MA GUNN'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS-- RIGHT HERE ON CRIME ALLEY.
WELL-- I HEAR THAT'S BETTER THAN REAL SCHOOL--
SOON...
SORRY TO MAKE YOU, MRS. GUNN--
FAYE GUNN IS ALWAYS OPEN FOR A NEW ENROLLEE, BATMAN.
HE CAN LIVE RIGHT HERE ON THE PREMISES. G'DAY, BATMAN--
SEE YA, BATMAN.
LEARN SOMETHING, JASON--
JASON IS ABOUT TO LEARN SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT--
WE'VE GOT A NEW PUPIL, LUVS. THE BATMAN SENT 'IM... NOW WHO WANTS TO SNUFF THE LITTLE STOOLIE FOR OLD MA?
TO BE CONTINUED

DC Comics Inc.
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

Jenette Kahn, President and Publisher
Dick Giordano, Vice Pres.-Executive Editor
Dennis O'Neil, Editor
Richard Bruning, Art Director
Terri Cunningham, Mgr.-Editorial Admin.
Pat Bastienne, Mgr.-Editorial Coordinator
Bob Rozakis, Production Manager
Paul Levitz, Executive Vice President
Joe Orlando, Vice Pres.-Creative Director
Ed Shukin, Vice Pres.-Circulation
Bruce Bristow, Marketing Director
Patrick Caldon, Controller

The response to the first installment of BATMAN: YEAR ONE has been tremendous. Due to the large volume of mail, I'll be running some excerpts from longer letters mixed in with whole letters. Not only are we getting more mail than ever, but the number of long, thoughtful letters is HUGE! Then there's the "Boy, am I happy!" letters like this one:

Denny,

I've just finished reading BATMAN: YEAR ONE PART 1 for about the fifteenth time, and all it does is get better. Miller and Mazzucchelli have a real masterpiece here, and they've only showed us one-fourth of it! I can't wait until next month!

I just got back into comics about three months ago, and I must say this is a great way to become reacquainted with the Dark Knight. The cover speaks for itself. That, the panel where Bruce is kneeling before his parents' graves, and him meeting Alfred in front of Wayne Manor. Those three scenes alone would speak for what the young millionaire is going through.

The story about Jim Gordon is great, too. I'm glad to see he is no longer gonna let the other "cops" push him around. The way for both Bruce Wayne and Jim Gordon will not be easy, and both will have to make countless sacrifices along the road, but they are destined to become two of the greatest crimefighters in history. LONG LIVE THE BATMAN!

Sincerely,
Shelby Pankratz
2920 Rhapsody Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

P.S. Okay, okay. All I want to know is: Who is gonna take the helm after these two are finished with their masterpiece? Miller and Mazzucchelli are a couple of the greatest.

For the answer to that last question, please refer to the credits at the bottom of the title page. The credits box shall telleth all...

*****

Dear Bat-People,

Is this the way it really happened? Did Gordon really enter the Gotham police force in disgrace? Did Bruce Wayne really spend twelve years abroad? Was he really 25 years old when he became Batman? Was Selina really a prostitute? Does the movie "The Mark of Zorro" really fit in with the timeline? Did Bruce really not say those famous words about criminals when the bat inspired him to become a Batman?

This time, I don't care. (Well, not much.) Because this time it feels right. Maybe you are trying to slip a new "modern" origin by us long-time readers. Maybe you are creating a "new" Batman here. But it doesn't matter much. Because if #404 is any indication, this "new" Batman is just the "old" Batman as he should always have been but which he has only actually been at the best of times in the past.

This wasn't the best Batman story I've ever read. In some ways, it wasn't even close. But it does put the focus on the character as he should be. If this focus can be kept consistent, this will have been a worthwhile exercise indeed. If it even establishes the basic mood of future stories, it will have served a great purpose.

"I shall become a bat." It shall never erase those "old" words from my mind. In fact, to me, I still believe he spoke those words too. But these new words are dramatic too. He will "become" a bat—it is not a disguise, but a transformation. His life changes here. It will never be the same again. He will be dominated by the decision. It will grow larger than the man who made it. As I said, this feels like the real Batman.

"I shall become a bat." Yes!

T.M. Maple
Box 1272, Station B
Weston, Ontario
CANADA M9L 2R9

*****

And then there were some "I'm not so happy" letters:

[Dear Frank Miller],

[...] I was thrilled to learn you were going to take over the Batman comic for a while, but now I question your choice of material. I'm sure I speak for many when I say tampering with an origin as firmly planted in comic book lore as that of the Batman is almost blasphemous. I could deal with flashes in *Dark Knight*, but this—creating new characters and situations to further dramatize a sequence of events we know and love and don't want altered—this is unnecessary. I don't like the ambiguous time period—televisions present when they shouldn't be—I'm sure I'll be happier once Batman comes into action, but this is more experimental material—The stuff of another special or graphic novel [...]

Eric Shoag
610 Beacon St. Box 1316
Boston, MA 02215

But mostly happy letters...

*****

Hey Denny—

Frank Miller's story in from Batman #404 reminded me an awful lot of the Bat-stories of yours that I used to read (and enjoy).

Later,

Elvis Orien
Route #4, Box 120
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

P.S. The new Bat-logo really looks sharp. I hope the book keeps it as a masthead.

*****

Dear Gothamites,

Here is the Batman we loved in *Dark Knight*. In part one, Lieutenant Gordon is more fearsome than the Batman himself, if that's possible. His treatment of Detective Flass was horrendous; just desserts or not. This was Frank Miller at his best.

The terseness of Mazzucchelli's art with Lewis' washed-out browns and greys creates the starkness, and dates the story in just the way I've always envisioned the Batman's beginning.

Oh. I love the logo alteration, too! Who's responsible?

Thank you for this fine story, and the ones in the 16 other DC magazines that I await monthly.

Clark Kent
2657 N. Mountain
Tucson, AZ 85719

Clark Kent?

*****

Dear Gentlemen,

I am just writing to inform you, in case you don't already know, that the artwork for *Batman: Year One Part 1* was atrocious. You should be ashamed of yourselves for releasing such trash. I've seen better work on "Hagar the Horrible." Where do you get off charging seventy-five cents for that ****. It's been a long time since I've bought a comic book and I think it will be a long time till I do so again and when I do, I'll be sure to "make mine Marvel."

Disgustedly,
Kevin Dwayne
35-11 33 St.
Astoria, NY 11106

P.S. Turn to page four and guess who you've unwittingly drawn in the lower right hand box. Give up? It's Gregory Peck, you idiots! Oh, by the way, I think Batman is a great character and can be a great comic book when it is handled with competence. (Bet I won't see this letter in your Bat-Signals column.)

In this life, there are some people who will probably never be happy...

•••••

[...] I keep coming back to one page in particular, page 21. In truth, in the past, as many times as I'd read it or heard it related, the death of Bruce Wayne's parents never really touched me. I knew "Yeah, that's why he's the Batman," but this time it *really* hit me. "Yeah. *That's* why he's the Batman." That poor kid—from utter delight to absolute bleakness in six panels. [...]

M.E. Tyrrell Gray
414 Winterhaven Dr.
Newport News, VA 23606

That's *why* I read comics...

•••••

[...] Overall, Miller's script stays true to the spirit of the Batman's origin, if not the letter. As in *Dark Knight*, the recounting of Wayne's parents' murder is brilliant. Bruce Wayne's character is essentially intact, and the prominence of Thomas and Martha Wayne shows a deep grasp of the Batman legend.

Likewise, I can only applaud the recognition of Gordon's importance to this series, as shown in the parallel storylines. Gordon's characterization is excellent, and his antagonizing of corrupt officials is a gripping subplot. Detective Flass and Commissioner Loeb are potent and compelling villains, as is usual from Miller.

Unfortunately, many of Miller's bad habits have spilled over from DK into this new mini-series. I detect here the same lack of subtlety, the same blunt cynicism. The military jargon, used in both DK and Year One, is "right in step," so to speak, with current politics and fashion, to my additional dismay. Wayne's references to "reconnaissance missions" and "enemy camps" are way out of character.

[...] Granted, these are superficial offenses. I can't call it a failure. Where it counts, Miller has done a good job, but his mistakes are as bad as they come, which is all the more frustrating when you consider what could have been.

Malcolm Warren
81 Green St.
Brattleboro, VT 05301

•••••

To Denny, Frank, David,

Congratulations on your brilliant first issue of the BATMAN: YEAR ONE storyline. The art in this issue captured the grimy, dark and fascinating world of Gotham as it hasn't been captured before. David Mazzucchelli and Richmond Lewis seemed to understand the combination of dark and light which is essential to this book. Great work, guys. Keep it up.

However, the superb art was not why I chose to make this issue my first letter to the editor since Green Lantern's famous drug issues. The story was probably Frank Miller's best use of the characters. Any "good" writer can give quirks to new and unknown characters, but here were two of the most well-known people in comicdom: Jim Gordon and Bruce Wayne. And this story made these characters live with such vitality that it was as if you had just met them for the first time. Thank you.

Your first story, however, left me with a question which perhaps you could answer now if it is not going to be explained in the storyline. The question is, about Barbara "Batgirl" Gordon: Batman #404 left me with the impression that the Barbara mentioned over and over again was Lt. Gordon's wife, not his daughter. So this leaves me with four possibilities: 1) Batgirl is now history, she has been swept under the rug with Ace and Bat-Mite, never to be heard from again. 2) Barbara will be the child born to the Gordons, and she will be named after her mother, who shall die in childbirth. The problem with this scenario is that by the time Batgirl appears, Batman will be into his forties, almost at the Dark Knight age. 3) Barbara is already in college somewhere like at Upstate U. and will join the family on breaks and/or after her graduation. This scenario would also explain the extreme reluctance of Lieutenant Gordon toward his wife's pregnancy, after all, she is in her late 30's or early 40's, and a new child would be both a physical strain on her and a financial one on him. 4) Someone just forgot about her when the story was written. I hope not. While Batgirl is not a favorite of mine (I preferred the Huntress), I would hate to think that both of the distaff crusaders were axed for no reason.

Please don't get me wrong, I loved your story. I'm nitpicking here. I love your "new" Catwoman and the possibilities for future male vs. female, power and dominance confrontations between her and Batman. I also think our new "friend" Lieutenant Flass is a keeper, too; after all, good slimy characters are hard to find. Keep the Bat-renaissance going, guys.

Horace J. McConnell
6557 Oak Park Ct.
Galloway, OH 43119

Batgirl's origin was revised along with Batman's, and the result will make its appearance in SECRET ORIGINS #20, which will feature the origin of guess who? Your guess #3 is the closest, but you've got a few major details wrong.

When you refer to Richmond and Dave as the "guys," make sure you're speaking in the generic. Richmond is not only a friendly-faced she, but is also a busy artist in the "real" world, and the wife of that artist guy with too many consonants in his last name, David Manicottimantovanimacaronimazzucchelli.

•••••

Dear Frank and Dave,

RE: BATMAN: YEAR ONE Part 1, Batman #404

COMMENTARY:

been waiting 3 months for this comic...

was worth the wait...

best comic published in the world today...

love the James Gordon storyline...

Will Batman: Year Two be by Frank and Dave? If so, how about a Year Three?

Congratulations.

Paul Bergman
116 Newport Ave.
Scarborough, Ontario
CANADA M1L 1J5

Batman: Year Two will be by Mike Barr and Alan Davis, Paul.

Well, that's a good place to stop, don'tcha think? There were no letters from Wisconsin this month. Is there some kind of plague there, keeping all those Wisconsinian Bat-fans from using their pens and typewriters? Come on, Wisconsin! Let's hear from you... See you next month, same Bat-Page ... or something like that.

—Barbara

FROM THE DEN

A year already. Hey, time flies when you're having fun.

When I first occupied this chair 12 months ago, give or take a few days, we mostly had plans. We were going to get BATMAN: YEAR ONE underway in ***Batman;*** we were going to do BATMAN: YEAR TWO in ***Detective;*** we were going to change the creative teams on both books and initiate a new cycle of stories—attempt, at least, to recreate the "classic" Batman, the obsessed, brilliant, relentless crimefighter.

All that has been accomplished, and I feel good about every bit of it.

But we've just begun. Within the ***next*** 12 months, we'll be giving you the long-awaited ***Joker*** graphic novel by Alan Moore and Brian Bolland. (I have 18 pages of this in the cabinet and it far exceeds even my elevated expectations.) We'll be introducing a new female Bat-character. We'll complete retelling the story of how Jason Todd replaced Dick Grayson as Robin and place Jason firmly in the ***Batman*** mythos.

And we'll use all the skill, care and imagination we can muster to give you the most entertaining Batman stories ever published.

I meant what I said up there in the first line. Time does, indeed, fly when you're having fun and that's why I expect the next 12 months to pass in a blink.